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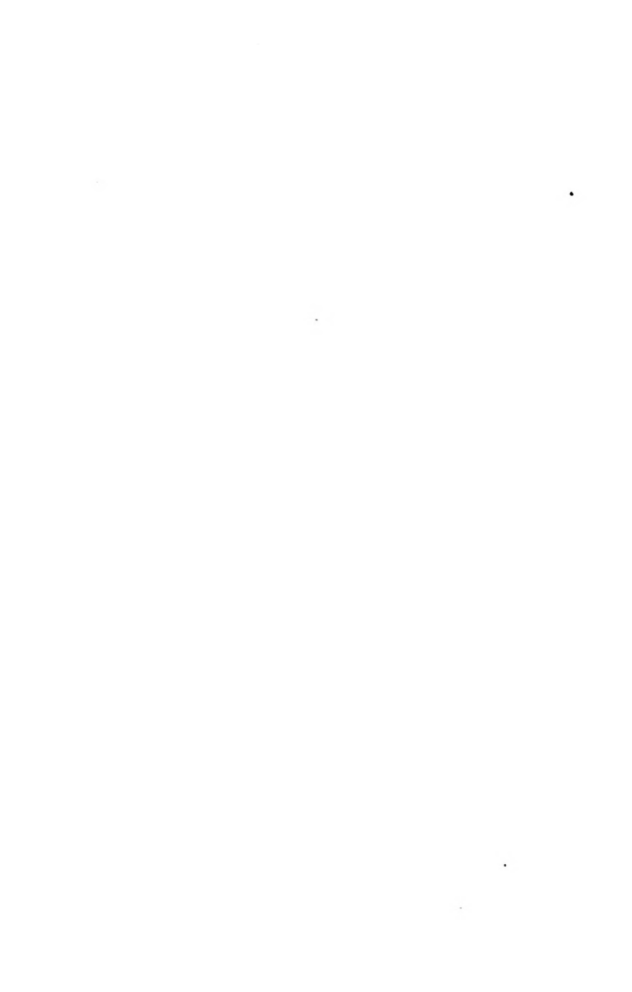








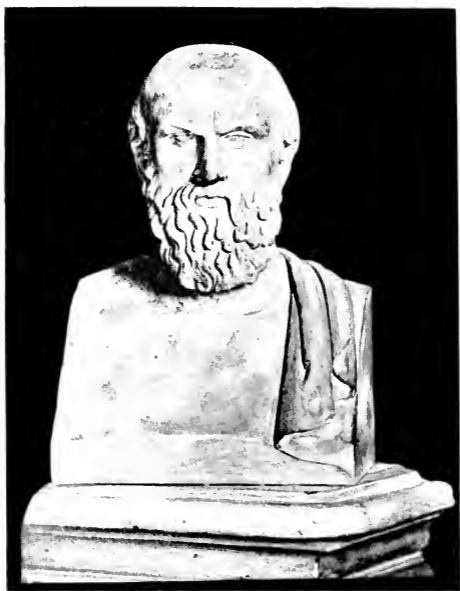












# Promethium

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# Prometheus Bound

Translated from the Greek of

By

E. V. Rieu, D.D.



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PROMETHEUS BOUND

I

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## ARGUMENT.

*In the old time, when Cronos was sovereign of the Gods, Zeus, whom he had begotten, rose up against him, and the Gods were divided in their counsels, some, the Titans chiefly, siding with the father, and some with the son. And Prometheus, the son of Earth or Themis, though one of the Titans, supported Zeus, as did also Okeanos, and by his counsels Zeus obtained the victory, and Cronos was chained in Tartaros, and the Titans buried under mountains, or kept in bonds in Hades. And then Prometheus, seeing the miseries of the race of men, of whom Zeus took little heed, stole the fire which till then had belonged to none but Hephæstos and was used only for the Gods, and gave it to mankind, and taught them many arts whereby their wretchedness was lessened. But Zeus being wroth with Prometheus for this deed, sent Hephæstos, with his two helpers, Strength and Force, to fetter him to a rock on Caucasos.*

*And in yet another story was the cruelty of the Gods made known. For Zeus loved*

## Prometheus Bound

*Io, the daughter of Inachos, king of Argos, and she was haunted by visions of the night, telling her of his passion, and she told her father thereof. And Inachos, sending to the God at Delphi, was told to drive Io forth from her home. And Zeus gave her the horns of a cow, and Hera, who hated her because she was dear to Zeus, sent with her a gadfly that stung her, and gave her no rest, and drove her over many lands.*

*Note.*—The play is believed to have been the second of a Trilogy, of which the first was *Prometheus the Fire-giver*, and the third *Prometheus Unbound*.



Dramatis Personæ.

PROMETHEUS.

OKEANOS.

HEPHÆSTOS.

HERMES.

STRENGTH.

FORCE.

*Chorus of Ocean Nymphs.*

## PROMETHEUS BOUND

SCENE.—Skythia, *on the heights of Caucasos.*  
*The Euxine seen in the distance.*

*Enter* HEPHÆSTOS, STRENGTH, and FORCE,  
*leading* PROMETHEUS *in chains.*<sup>1</sup>

*Strength.* Lo! to a plain, earth's boundary  
remote,  
We now are come,—the tract as Skythian  
known,  
A desert inaccessible : and now,  
Hephæstos, it is thine to do the hests  
The Father gave thee, to these lofty crags  
To bind this crafty trickster fast in chains  
Of adamantine bonds that none can break ;  
For he thy choice flower stealing, the bright  
glory  
Of fire that all arts spring from, hath bestowed it  
On mortal men. And so for fault like this  
He now must pay the Gods due penalty,  
That he may learn to bear the sovereign rule  
Of Zeus, and cease from his philanthropy.

---

See note 1 on page 63.

*Heph.* O Strength, and thou, O Force, the  
hest of Zeus,

As far as touches you, attains its end,  
And nothing hinders. Yet my courage fails  
To bind a God of mine own kin by force  
To this bare rock where tempests wildly sweep;  
And yet I needs must muster courage for it:  
'T is no slight thing the Father's words to scorn.  
O thou of Themis [*to PROMETHEUS*] wise in  
counsel son,

Full deep of purpose, lo! against my will,<sup>2</sup>  
I fetter thee against thy will with bonds  
Of bronze that none can loose, to this lone height,  
Where thou shalt know nor voice nor face of  
man,

But scorching in the hot blaze of the sun,  
Shalt lose thy skin's fair beauty. Thou shalt  
long

For starry-mantled night to hide day's sheen,  
For sun to melt the rime of early dawn;  
And evermore the weight of present ill  
Shall wear thee down. Unborn as yet is he  
Who shall release thee: this the fate thou  
gain'st

As due reward for thy philanthropy.  
For thou, a God not fearing wrath of Gods,  
In thy transgression gav'st their power to men;  
And therefore on this rock of little ease

---

See note 2 on page 63.

Thou still shalt keep thy watch, nor lying down,  
 Nor knowing sleep, nor ever bending knee;  
 And many groans and wailings profitless  
 Thy lips shall utter; for the mind of Zeus  
 Remains inexorable. Who holds a power  
 But newly gained<sup>3</sup> is ever stern of mood.

*Strength.* Let be! Why linger in this idle pity?  
 Why dost not hate a God to Gods a foe,  
 Who gave thy choicest prize to mortal men?

*Heph.* Strange is the power of kin and  
 intercourse.<sup>4</sup>

*Strength.* I own it; yet to slight the Father's  
 words,

How may that be? Is not that fear the worse?

*Heph.* Still art thou ruthless, full of  
 savagery.

*Strength.* There is no help in weeping  
 over him:

Spend not thy toil on things that profit not.

*Heph.* O handicraft to me intolerable!

*Strength.* Why loath'st thou it? Of these  
 thy present griefs

That craft of thine is not one whit the cause.

*Heph.* And yet I would some other had  
 that skill.

*Strength.* All things bring toil except  
 for Gods to reign;<sup>5</sup>

---

See notes 3, 4, and 5 on page 63.

For none but Zeus can boast of freedom true.

*Heph.* Too well I see the proof, and gainsay not.

*Strength.* Wilt thou not speed to fix the chains on him,

Lest He, the Father, see thee loitering here?

*Heph.* Well, here the handcuffs thou may'st see prepared.

*Strength.* In thine hands take him. Then with all thy might

Strike with thine hammer; nail him to the rocks.

*Heph.* The work goes on, I ween, and not in vain.

*Strength.* Strike harder, rivet, give no whit of ease:

A wondrous knack has he to find resource,  
Even where all might seem to baffle him.

*Heph.* Lo! this his arm is fixed inextricably.

*Strength.* Now rivet thou this other fast, that he

May learn, though sharp, that he than Zeus is duller.

*Heph.* No one but he could justly blame my work.

*Strength.* Now drive the stern jaw of the adamant wedge

Right through his chest with all the strength thou hast.



*Heph.* Ah me! Prometheus, for thy woes I  
groan.

*Strength.* Again, thou 'rt loth, and for the  
foes of Zeus

Thou groanest: take good heed to it lest thou  
Ere long with cause thyself commiserate.

*Heph.* Thou see'st a sight unsightly to our  
eyes.

*Strength.* I see this man obtaining his de-  
serts:

Nay, cast thy breast-chains round about his ribs.

*Heph.* I must needs do it. Spare thine o'er  
much bidding;

Go thou below and rivet both his legs,<sup>6</sup>

*Strength.* Nay, I will bid thee, urge thee to  
thy work.

*Heph.* There it is done, and that with no long  
toil.

*Strength.* Now with thy full power fix the  
galling fetters;

Thou hast a stern o'erlooker of thy work.

*Heph.* Thy tongue but utters words that  
match thy form.<sup>7</sup>

*Strength.* Choose thou the melting mood;  
but chide not me

For my selfwill and wrath and ruthlessness.

*Heph.* Now let us go, his limbs are bound  
in chains.

---

See notes 6 and 7 on page 63.

*Strength.* Here then wax proud, and stealing  
 what belongs  
 To the Gods, to mortals give it. What can  
 they  
 Avail to rescue thee from these thy woes?  
 Falsely the Gods have given thee thy name,  
 Prometheus, Forethought; forethought thou  
 dost need  
 To free thyself from this rare handiwork.

[*Exeunt* HEPHÆSTOS, STRENGTH, and  
 FORCE, *leaving* PROMETHEUS *on the rock.*

*Prom.*<sup>s</sup> Thou firmament of God, and swift-  
 winged winds,  
 Ye springs of rivers, and of ocean waves  
 That smile innumerable! Mother of us all,  
 O Earth, and Sun's all-seeing eye, behold,  
 I pray, what I a God from Gods endure.  
     Behold in what foul case  
     I for ten thousand years  
     Shall struggle in my woe,  
     In these unseemly chains.  
 Such doom the new-made Monarch of the Blest  
     Hath now devised for me.  
 Woe, woe! The present and the oncoming pang  
     I wail, as I search out  
 The place and hour when end of all these ills  
     Shall dawn on me at last.

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See note 8 on page 64.

What say I? All too clearly I foresee  
The things that come, and nought of pain shall  
be

By me unlooked-for; but I needs must bear  
My destiny as best I may, knowing well  
The might resistless of Necessity.

And neither may I speak of this my fate,  
Nor hold my peace. For I, poor I, through  
giving

Great gifts to mortal men, am prisoner made  
In these fast fetters; yea, in fennel stalk<sup>9</sup>  
I snatched the hidden spring of stolen fire,  
Which is to men a teacher of all arts,  
Their chief resource. And now this penalty  
Of that offence I pay, fast riveted  
In chains beneath the open firmament.

Ha! ha! What now?

What sound, what odour floats invisibly?<sup>10</sup>  
Is it of God or man, or blending both?  
And has one come to this remotest rock  
To look upon my woes? Or what wills he?  
Behold me bound, a God to evil doomed,

The foe of Zeus, and held

In hatred by all Gods

Who tread the courts of Zeus:

And this for my great love,

Too great, for mortal men.

Ah me! what rustling sounds

---

See notes 9 and 10 on page 64.

Hear I of birds not far?  
 With the light whirr of wings  
 The air re-echoeth:

All that draws nigh to me is cause of fear.<sup>11</sup>

*Enter Chorus of Ocean Nymphs, with wings,  
 floating in the air*<sup>12</sup>

*Chor.* Nay, fear thou nought: in love  
 All our array of wings  
 In eager race hath come  
 To this high peak, full hardly gaining o'er  
 Our Father's mind and will;  
 And the swift-rushing breezes bore me on:  
 For lo! the echoing sound of blows on iron  
 Pierced to our cave's recess, and put to flight  
 My shamefast modesty,  
 And I in unshod haste, on winged car,  
 To thee rushed hitherward,

*Prom.* Ah me! ah me!  
 Offspring of Tethys blest with many a child,  
 Daughters of Old Okeanos that rolls  
 Round all the earth with never-sleeping stream.  
 Behold ye me, and see  
 With what chains fettered fast,  
 I on the topmost crags of this ravine  
 Shall keep my sentry-post unenviable.

*Chor.* I see it, O Prometheus, and a mist  
 Of fear and full of tears comes o'er mine eyes,  
 Thy fame beholding thus,

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See notes 11 and 12 on page 64.

Writhing on these high rocks  
In adamantine ills.

New pilots now o'er high Olympos rule,  
And with new-fashioned laws  
Zeus reigns, down-trampling right,  
And all the ancient powers He sweeps away.

*Prom.* Ah! would that 'neath the Earth,  
'neath Hades, too.

Home of the dead, far down to Tartaros  
Unfathomable He in fetters fast

In wrath had hurled me down :  
So neither had a God

Nor any other mocked at these my woes ;  
But now, the wretched plaything of the winds,  
I suffer ill at which my foes rejoice.

*Chor.* Nay, which of all the Gods  
Is so hard-hearted as to joy in this?  
Who, Zeus excepted, doth not pity thee  
In these thine ills? But He,  
Ruthless, with soul unbent,  
Subdues the heavenly host, nor will He cease.<sup>13</sup>  
Until his heart be satiate with power  
Or some one seize with subtle stratagem  
The sovran might that so resistless seemed.

*Prom.* Nay, of a truth, though put to evil  
shame,  
In massive fetters bound,  
The Ruler of the Gods

---

See note 13 on page 64.

Shall yet have need of me, yes, e'en of me,  
 To tell the counsel new  
 That seeks to strip from him  
 His sceptre and his might of sovereignty.  
 In vain will He with words  
 Or suasion's honeyed charms  
 Sooth me, nor will I tell  
 Through fear of his stern threats,  
 Ere He shall set me free  
 From these my bonds, and make,  
 Of his own choice, amends  
 For all these outrages.

*Chor.* Full rash art thou, and yield'st  
 In not a jot to bitterest form of woe ;  
 Thou art o'er-free and reckless in thy speech :  
 But piercing fear hath stirred  
 My inmost soul to strife ;  
 For I fear greatly touching thy distress,  
 As to what haven of these woes of thine  
 Thou now must steer : the son of Cronos hath  
 A stubborn mood and heart inexorable.

*Prom.* I know that Zeus is hard,  
 And keeps the Right supremely to himself ;  
 But then, I trow, He 'll be  
 Full pliant in his will,  
 When He is thus crushed down.  
 Then, calming down his mood  
 Of hard and bitter wrath,  
 He 'll hasten unto me,

As I to him shall haste,  
For friendship and for peace.

*Chor.* Hide it not from us, tell us all the tale :  
For what offence Zeus, having seized thee thus,  
So wantonly and bitterly insults thee :  
If the tale hurt thee not, inform thou us.

*Prom.* Painful are these things to me e'en to  
speak ;  
Painful is silence ; everywhere is woe.  
For when the high Gods fell on mood of wrath,  
And hot debate of mutual strife was stirred,  
Some wishing to hurl Cronos from his throne,  
That Zeus, forsooth, might reign ; while others  
strove,  
Eager that Zeus might never rule the Gods :  
Then I, full strongly seeking to persuade  
The Titans, yea, the sons of Heaven and Earth,  
Failed of my purpose. Scorning subtle arts,  
With counsels violent, they thought that they  
By force would gain full easy mastery.  
But then not once or twice my mother Themis  
And Earth, one form though bearing many  
names, <sup>14</sup>  
Hail prophesied the future, how 't would run,  
That not by strength nor yet by violence,  
But guile, should those who prospered gain the  
day.  
And when in my words I this counsel gave,

---

See note 14 on page 64.

They deigned not e'en to glance at it at all,  
And then of all that offered, it seemed best  
To join my mother, and of mine own will,  
Not against his will, take my side with Zeus,  
And by my counsels, mine, the dark deep pit  
Of Tartaros the ancient Cronos holds,  
Himself and his allies. Thus profiting  
By me, the mighty ruler of the Gods  
Repays me with these evil penalties :  
For somehow this disease in sovereignty  
Inheres, of never trusting to one's friends. <sup>15</sup>  
And since ye ask me under what pretence  
He thus maltreats me, I will show it you :  
For as soon as He upon his father's throne  
Had sat secure, forthwith to divers Gods  
He divers gifts distributed, and his realm  
Began to order. But of mortal men  
He took no heed, but purposed utterly  
To crush their race and plant another new ;  
And, I excepted, none dared cross his will ;  
But I did dare, and mortal men I freed  
From passing on to Hades thunder-stricken ;  
And therefore am I bound beneath these woes,  
Dreadful to suffer, pitiable to see :  
And I, who in my pity thought of men  
More than myself, have not been worthy  
deemed  
To gain like favour, but all ruthlessly

---

See note 15 on page 65.



I thus am chained, foul shame this sight to  
Zeus.

*Chor.* Iron-hearted must he be and made of  
rock

Who is not moved, Prometheus, by thy woes :  
Fain could I wish I ne'er had seen such  
things,

And, seeing them, am wounded to the heart.

*Prom.* Yea, I am piteous for my friends to  
see.

*Chor.* Did'st thou not go to farther lengths  
than this ?

*Prom.* I made men cease from contemplating  
death.<sup>16</sup>

*Chor.* What medicine did'st thou find for  
that disease ?

*Prom.* Blind hopes I gave to live and dwell  
with them.

*Chor.* Great service that thou did'st for  
mortal men !

*Prom.* And more than that, I gave them fire,  
yes I.

*Chor.* Do short-lived men the flaming fire  
possess ?

*Prom.* Yea, and full many an art they'll  
learn from it.

*Chor.* And is it then on charges such as these  
That Zeus maltreats thee, and no respite gives

---

See note 16 on page 65.

Of many woes? And has thy pain no end?

*Prom.* End there is none, except as pleases  
Him.

*Chor.* How shall it please? What hope hast  
thou? See'st not  
That thou hast sinned? Yet to say how thou  
sinned'st

Gives me no pleasure, and is pain to thee.

Well! let us leave these things, and, if we may,  
Seek out some means to 'scape from this thy  
woe.

*Prom.* 'Tis a light thing for one who has his  
foot

Beyond the reach of evil to exhort

And counsel him who suffers. This to me  
Was all well known. Yea, willing, willingly  
I sinned, nor will deny it. Helping men,  
I for myself found trouble: yet I thought not  
That I with such dread penalties as these  
Should wither here on these high-towering  
crag,

Lighting on this lone hill and neighbourless.

Wherefore wail not for these my present woes,  
But, drawing nigh, my coming fortunes hear,  
That ye may learn the whole tale to the end.

Nay, hearken, hearken; show your sympathy  
With him who suffers now. 'Tis thus that woe,  
Wandering, now falls on this one, now on that.

*Chor.* Not to unwilling hearers hast thou  
uttered,

Prometheus, thy request,  
 And now with nimble foot abandoning  
     My swiftly rushing car,  
 And the pure æther, path of birds of heaven,  
 I will draw near this rough and rocky land,  
     For much do I desire  
 To hear this tale, full measure, of thy woes.

*Enter OKEANOS, on a car drawn by a winged  
 gryphon.*

*Okean.* Lo, I come to thee, Prometheus,  
 Reaching goal of distant journey,<sup>17</sup>  
 Guiding this my winged courser  
 By my will, without a bridle;  
 And thy sorrows move my pity.  
 Force, in part, I deem, of kindred  
 Leads me on, nor know I any,  
 Whom, apart from kin, I honour  
 More than thee, in fuller measure.  
 This thou shalt own true and earnest:  
 I deal not in glozing speeches.  
 Come then, tell me how to help thee:  
 Ne'er shalt thou say that one more friendly  
 Is found than unto thee is Okean.

*Prom.* Let be. What boots it? Thou then  
     too art come  
 To gaze upon my sufferings. How did'st dare

---

See note 17 on page 65.

Leaving the stream that bears thy name, and  
caves

Hewn in the living rock, this land to visit,  
Mother of iron? What then, art thou come  
To gaze upon my fall and offer pity?

Behold this sight: see here the friend of Zeus,  
Who helped to seat him in his sovereignty,  
With what foul outrage I am crushed by him!

*Okean.* I see, Prometheus, and I wish to give  
thee

My best advice, all subtle though thou be.  
Know thou thyself,<sup>18</sup> and fit thy soul to moods  
To thee full new. New king the Gods have  
now;

But if thou utter words thus rough and sharp,  
Perchance, though sitting far away on high,  
Zeus yet may hear thee, and his present wrath  
Seem to thee but as child's play of distress.  
Nay, thou poor sufferer, quit the rage thou hast,  
And seek a remedy for these thine ills.

A tale thrice-told, perchance, I seem to speak:  
Lo! this, Prometheus, is the punishment  
Of thine o'er lofty speech, nor art thou yet  
Humbled, nor yieldest to thy miseries,  
And fain would'st add fresh evils unto these.  
But thou, if thou wilt take me as thy teacher,  
Wilt not kick out against the pricks;<sup>19</sup> seeing  
well

---

See notes 18 and 19 on page 65.

A monarch reigns who gives account to none.  
And now I go, and will an effort make,  
If I, perchance, may free thee from thy woes;  
Be still then, hush thy petulance of speech,  
Or knowest thou not, o'er-clever as thou art,  
That idle tongues must still their forfeit pay?

*Prom.* I envy thee, seeing thou art free from  
blame

Though thou shared'st all, and in my cause  
wast bold;<sup>20</sup>

Nay, let me be, nor trouble thou thyself;  
Thou wilt not, canst not soothe Him; very hard  
Is He of soothing. Look to it thyself,  
Lest thou some mischief meet with in the way.

*Okean.* It is thy wout thy neighbour's minds  
to school

Far better than thine own. From deeds, not  
words,

I draw my proof. But do not draw me back  
When I am hasting on, for lo, I deem,  
I deem that Zeus will grant this boon to me,  
That I should free thee from these woes of thine.

*Prom.* I thank thee much, yea, ne'er will  
cease to thank;

For thou no whit of zeal dost lack; yet take,  
I pray no trouble for me; all in vain  
Thy trouble, nothing helping, e'en if thou

---

See note 20 on page 65.

Should'st care to take the trouble. Nay, be  
still ;

Keep out of harm's way ; sufferer though I be,  
I would not therefore wish to give my woes  
A wider range o'er others. No, not so :

For lo ! my mind is wearied with the grief  
Of that my kinsman Atlas,<sup>21</sup> who doth stand  
In the far West, supporting on his shoulders  
The pillars of the earth and heaven, a burden  
His arms can ill but hold : I pity too  
The giant dweller of Kilikian caves,  
Dread portent, with his hundred hands, subdued  
By force, the mighty Typhon<sup>22</sup> who arose  
'Gainst all the Gods, with sharp and dreadful  
jaws

Hissing out slaughter, and from out his eyes  
There flashed the terrible brightness as of one  
Who would lay low the sovereignty of Zeus.  
But the unsleeping dart of Zeus came on him,  
Down-swooping thunderbolt that breathes out  
flame,

Which from his lofty boastings startled him,  
For he i' the heart was struck, to ashes burnt,  
His strength all thunder shattered ; and he lies  
A helpless, powerless carcase, near the strait  
Of the great sea, fast pressed beneath the roots  
Of ancient Ætna, where on highest peak

---

See notes 21 and 22 on page 65.

Hephæstos sits and smites his iron red-hot,  
From whence hereafter streams of fire shall  
burst,<sup>23</sup>

Devouring with fierce jaws the golden plains  
Of fruitful, fair Sikelia. Such the wrath  
That Typhou shall belch forth with bursts of  
storm,

Hot, breathing fire, and unapproachable,  
Though burnt and charred by thunderbolts of  
Zeus.

Not inexperienced art thou, nor dost need  
My teaching : save thyself, as thou know'st how;  
And I will drink my fortune to the dregs,  
Till from his wrath the mind of Zeus shall rest.<sup>24</sup>

*Okean.* Know'st thou not this, Prometheus,  
even this,

Of wrath's disease wise words the healers are ?

*Prom.* Yea, could one soothe the troubled  
heart in time,

Nor seek by force to tame the soul's proud flesh.

*Okean.* But in due forethought with bold  
daring blent,

What mischief see'st thou lurking ? Tell me  
this.

*Prom.* Toil bootless, and simplicity full fond.

*Okean.* Let me, I pray, that sickness suffer,  
since

---

See notes 23 and 24 on page 66.

'T is best being wise to have not wisdom's show.

*Prom.* Nay, but this error shall be deemed  
as mine.

*Okean.* Thy word then clearly sends me home  
at once.

*Prom.* Yea, lest thy pity for me make a  
foe. . . .

*Okean.* What ! of that new king on his mighty  
throne ?

*Prom.* Look to it, lest his heart be vexed  
with thee.

*Okean.* Thy fate, Prometheus, teaches me  
that lesson.

*Prom.* Away, withdraw ! keep thou the mind  
thou hast.

*Okean.* Thou urgest me who am in act to  
haste ;

For this my bird four-footed flaps with wings

The clear path of the æther ; and full fain

Would he bend knee in his own stall at home.

[*Exit.*

#### STROPH. I

*Chor.* I grieve, Prometheus, for thy dreary fate  
Shedding from tender eyes

The dew of plenteous tears ;

With streams, as when the watery south wind  
blows,

My cheek is wet ;



For lo ! these things are all unenviable,  
 And Zeus, by his own laws his sway maintaining,  
     Shows to the elder Gods  
     A mood of haughtiness.

## ANTISTROPH. I

And all the country echoeth with the moan,  
     And poureth many a tear  
     For that magnific power  
 Of ancient days far-seen that thou did'st share  
     With those of one blood sprung ;  
 And all the mortal men who hold the plain  
 Of holy Asia as their land of sojourn,  
     They grieve in sympathy  
     For thy woes lamentable.

## STROPH. II

And they, the maiden band who find their home  
     On distant Colchian coasts,  
     Fearless of fight,<sup>25</sup>  
 Or Skythian horde in earth's remotest clime,  
     By far Mæotic lake ;<sup>26</sup>

## ANTISTROPH. II

And warlike glory of Arabia's tribes,<sup>27</sup>  
     Who nigh to Caucasos  
     In rock-fort dwell,  
 An army fearful, with sharp-pointed spear

---

See notes 25, 26 and 27 on page 66.

Raging in war's array.

STROPH. III

One other Titan only have I seen,  
 One other of the Gods,  
 Thus bound in woes of adamantine strength—  
 Atlas, who ever groans  
 Beneath the burden of a crushing might,  
 The out-spread vault of heaven.

ANTISTROPH III

And lo! the ocean billows murmur loud  
 In one accord with him;<sup>28</sup>  
 The sea-depths groan, and Hades' swarthy pit  
 Re-echoeth the sound,  
 And fountains of clear rivers, as they flow,  
 Bewail his bitter griefs.

*Prom.* Think not it is through pride or stiff  
 self-will

That I am silent. But my heart is worn,  
 Self-contemplating, as I see myself  
 Thus outraged. Yet what other hand than mine  
 Gave these young Gods in fulness all their gifts?  
 But these I speak not of; for I should tell  
 To you that know them. But those woes of  
 men<sup>29</sup>

List ye to them,—how they, before as babes,

---

See notes 28 and 29 on page 66.

By me were roused to reason, taught to think ;  
And this I say, not finding fault with men,  
But showing my good-will in all I gave.  
For first, though seeing, all in vain they saw,  
And hearing, heard not rightly. But, like  
forms  
Of phantom-dreams, throughout their life's  
whole length  
They muddled all at random ; did not know  
Houses of brick that catch the sunlight's  
warmth,  
Nor yet the work of carpentry. They dwelt  
In hollowed holes, like swarms of tiny ants,  
In sunless depths of caverns ; and they had  
No certain signs of winter, nor of spring  
Flower-laden, nor of summer with her fruits ;  
But without counsel fared their whole life long,  
Until I showed the risings of the stars,  
And settings hard to recognise.<sup>30</sup> And I  
Found Number for them, chief device of all,  
Groupings of letters, Memory's handmaid that,  
And mother of the Muses.<sup>31</sup> And I first  
Bound in the yoke wild steeds, submissive made  
Or to the collar or men's limbs, that so  
They might in man's place bear his greatest  
toils ;  
And horses trained to love the rein I yoked

---

See notes 30 and 31 on page 66.

To chariots, glory of wealth's pride of state ; <sup>32</sup>  
 Nor was it any one but I that found  
 Sea-crossing, canvas-wingèd cars of ships :  
 Such rare designs inventing ( wretched me ! )  
 For mortal men, I yet have no device  
 By which to free myself from this my woe. <sup>33</sup>

*Chor.* Foul shame thou sufferest : of thy  
 sense bereaved,  
 Thou errest greatly : and, like leech unskilled,  
 Thou lovest heart when smitten with disease,  
 And know'st not how to find the remedies  
 Wherewith to heal thine own soul's sicknesses.

*Prom.* Hearing what yet remains thou'lt  
 wonder more,  
 What arts and what resources I devised :  
 And this the chief : if any one fell ill,  
 There was no help for him, nor healing food,  
 Nor unguent, nor yet potiou ; but for want  
 Of drugs they wasted, till I showed to them  
 The blendings of all mild medicaments, <sup>34</sup>  
 Wherewith they ward the attacks of sickness sore  
 I gave them many modes of prophecy ; <sup>35</sup>  
 And I first taught them what dreams needs  
 must prove  
 True visions, and made known the ominous  
 sounds  
 Full hard to know ; and tokens by the way,

---

See notes 32, 33, 34 and 35 on pages 66 and 67.

And flights of taloned birds I clearly marked,—  
Those on the right propitious to mankind,  
And those sinister,—and what form of life  
They each maintain, and what their enmities  
Each with the other, and their loves and friend-  
ships ;

And of the inward parts the plumpness smooth,  
And with what colour they the Gods would  
please,

And the streaked comeliness of gall and liver :  
And with burnt limbs enwrap in fat, and chine,  
I led men on to art full difficult :

And I gave eyes to omens drawn from fire,  
Till then dim-vised. So far then for this.

And 'neath the earth the hidden boons for men,  
Bronze, iron, silver, gold, who else could say  
That he, ere I did, found them ? None, I know,  
Unless he fain would babble idle words.

In one short word, then, learn the truth con-  
densed,—

All arts of mortals from Prometheus spring.

*Chor.* Nay, be not thou to men so overkind,  
While thou thyself art in sore evil case ;  
For I am sanguine that thou too, released  
From bonds, shall be as strong as Zeus himself.

*Prom.* It is not thus that Fate's decree is  
fixed ;  
But I, long crushed with twice ten thousand  
woes

And bitter pains, shall then escape my bonds ;  
Art is far weaker than Necessity.

*Chor.* Who guides the helm, then, of Necessity ?

*Prom.* Fates triple-formed, Erinnyes unforgetting.

*Chor.* Is Zeus, then, weaker in his might than these ?

*Prom.* Not even He can 'scape the thing decreed.

*Chor.* What is decreed for Zeus but still to reign ?

*Prom.* Thou may'st no further learn, ask thou no more.

*Chor.* 'T is doubtless some dread secret which thou hidest.

*Prom.* Of other theme make mention, for the time

Is not yet come to utter this, but still  
It must be hidden to the uttermost ;  
For by thus keeping it it is that I  
Escape my bondage foul, and these my pains.

STROPH. I

*Chor.* Ah ! ne'er may Zeus the Lord,  
Whose sovran sway rules all,  
His strength in conflict set  
Against my feeble will !  
Nor may I fail to serve

The Gods with holy feast  
Of whole burnt-offerings,  
Where the stream ever flows  
That bears my father's name,  
The great Okeanos !  
Nor may I sin in speech !  
May this grace more and more  
Sink deep into my soul  
And never fade away !

## ANTISTROPH. I

Sweet is it in strong hope  
To spend long years of life,  
With bright and cheering joy  
Our heart's thoughts nourishing.  
I shudder, seeing thee  
Thus vexed and harassed sore  
By twice ten thousand woes ;  
For thou in pride of heart,  
Having no fear of Zeus,  
In thine own obstinacy,  
Dost show for mortal men,  
Prometheus, love o'ermuch.

## STROPH. II

See how that boon, dear friends,  
For thee is bootless found.  
Say, where is any help ?  
What aid from mortals comes ?

Hast thou not seen this brief and powerless life,  
 Fleeting as dreams, with which man's purblind  
 race

Is fast in fetters bound?  
 Never shall counsels vain  
 Of mortal men break through  
 The harmony of Zeus.

ANTISTROPH. II

This lesson have I learnt  
 Beholding thy sad fate,  
 Prometheus! Other strains  
 Come back upon my mind,  
 When I sang wedding hymns around thy bath,  
 And at thy bridal bed, when thou did'st take  
 In wedlock's holy hands  
 One of the same sire born,  
 Our own Hesione,  
 Persuading her with gifts  
 As wife to share thy couch.

*Enter Io in form like a fair woman with a  
 heifer's horns,<sup>36</sup> followed by the  
 Spectre of ARGOS.*

*Io.* What land is this? What people?  
 Whom shall I  
 Say that I see thus vexed  
 With bit and curb of rock?

---

See note 36 on page 67.



For what offence dost thou  
 Bear fatal punishment?  
 Tell me to what far land  
 I've wandered here in woe.

Ah me! ah me!

Again the gadfly stings me miserable.

Spectre of Argos, thou, the earth-born  
 one—

Ah, keep him off, O Earth!

I fear to look upon that herdsman dread,

Him with ten thousand eyes:

Ah lo! he cometh with his crafty look,  
 Whom Earth refuses even dead to hold;<sup>37</sup>

But coming from beneath

He hunts me miserable,

And drives me famished o'er the sea-beach sand.

#### STROPH.

And still his waxened reed-pipe soundeth clear

A soft and slumberous strain,

O heavens! O ye Gods!

Whither do these long wanderings lead me on?

For what offence, O son of Cronos, what,

Hast thou thus bound me fast

In these great miseries?

Ah me! ah me!

And why with terror of the gadfly's sting

---

See note 37 on page 67.

Dost thou thus vex me, frenzied in my soul?  
 Burn me with fire, or bury me in earth,  
 Or to wild sea-beasts give me as a prey :  
     Nay, grudge me not, O King,  
     An answer to my prayers :  
 Enough my many-wandered wanderings  
     Have exercised my soul,  
     Nor have I power to learn  
     How to avert the woe.

(*To Prometheus*). Hear'st thou the voice of  
 maiden crowned with horns?

*Prom.* Surely I heard the maid by gadfly  
 driven,  
 Daughter of Inachos, who warmed the heart  
 Of Zeus with love, and now through Hera's  
     hate  
 Is tried, perforce, with wanderings over-long?

ANTISTROPH.

*Io.* How is it that thou speak'st my father's  
 name?  
     Tell me, the suffering one,  
     Who art thou, who, poor wretch,  
 Who thus so truly nam'st me miserable,  
     And tell'st the plague from Heaven,  
     Which with its haunting stings  
     Wears me to death? Ah woe!  
 And I with famished and unseemly bounds  
 Rush madly, driven by Hera's jealous craft.

Ah, who of all that suffer, born to woe,  
Have trouble like the pain that I endure ?

But thou, make clear to me

What yet for me remains,

What remedy, what healing for my pangs.

Show me, if thou dost know :

Speak out and tell to me,

The maid by wanderings vexed.

*Prom.* I will say plainly all thou seek'st to  
know ;

Not in dark tangled riddles, but plain speech,  
As it is meet that friends to friends should speak ;  
Thou see'st Prometheus who gave fire to men.

*Io.* O thou to men as benefactor known,  
Why, poor Prometheus, sufferest thou this pain ?

*Prom.* I have but now mine own woes  
ceased to wail.

*Io.* Wilt thou not then bestow this boon on  
me ?

*Prom.* Say what thou seek'st, for I will tell  
thee all.

*Io.* Tell me, who fettered thee in this ravine ?

*Prom.* The counsel was of Zeus, the hand  
Hephæstos'.

*Io.* Of what offence dost thou the forfeit pay ?

*Prom.* Thus much alone am I content to tell.

*Io.* Tell me, at least, besides, what end shall  
come

To my drear wanderings; when the time shall be.

*Prom.* Not to know this is better than to know.

*Io.* Nay, hide not from me what I have to bear.

*Prom.* It is not that I grudge the boon to thee.

*Io.* Why then delayest thou to tell the whole?

*Prom.* Not from ill will, but loth to vex thy soul.

*Io.* Nay, care thou not beyond what pleases me.

*Prom.* If thou desire it I must speak. Hear then.

*Chor.* Not yet though ; grant me share of pleasure too,

Let us first ask the tale of her great woe,  
While she unfolds her life's consuming chances ;  
Her future sufferings let her learn from thee.

*Prom.* 'T is thy work, *Io*, to grant these their wish,

On other grounds and as thy father's kin :<sup>38</sup>  
For to bewail and moan one's evil chance,  
Here where one trusts to gain a pitying tear  
From those who hear,—this is not labour lost.

*Io.* I know not how to disobey your wish ;  
So ye shall learn the whole that ye desire  
In speech full clear. And yet I blush to tell

---

See note 38 on page 67.

The storm that came from God, and brought  
the loss

Of maiden face, what way it seized on me.  
For nightly visions coming evermore  
Into my virgin bower, sought to woo me  
With glozing words. "O virgin greatly blest,  
Why art thou still a virgin when thou might'st  
Attain to highest wedlock? For with dart  
Of passion for thee Zeus doth glow, and fain  
Would make thee his. And thou, O child,  
spurn not

The bed of Zeus, but go to Lerna's field,  
Where feed thy father's flocks and herds,  
That so the eye of Zeus may find repose  
From this his craving." With such visions I  
Was haunted every evening, till I dared  
To tell my father all these dreams of night,  
And he to Pytho and Dodona sent  
Full many to consult the Gods, that he  
Might learn what deeds and words would please  
Heaven's lords.

And they came bringing speech of oracles  
Shot with dark sayings, dim and hard to know.  
At last a clear word came to Inachos  
Charging him plainly, and commanding him  
To thrust me from my country and my home,  
To stray at large<sup>39</sup> to utmost bounds of earth ;

---

See note 39 on page 67.

And, should he gainsay, that the fiery bolt  
Of Zeus should come and sweep away his  
race.

And he, by Loxias' oracles induced,  
Thrust me, against his will, against mine too,  
And drove me from my home ; but spite of all,  
The curb of Zeus constrained him this to do.  
And then forthwith my face and mind were  
changed ;

And hornèd, as ye see me, stung to the quick  
By biting gadfly, I with maddened leap  
Rushed to Kerchneia's fair and limpid stream,  
And fount of Lerna.<sup>40</sup> And a giant herds-  
man,

Argos, full rough of temper, followed me,  
With many an eye beholding, on my track.  
And him a sudden and unlooked-for doom  
Deprived of life. And I, by gadfly stung,  
By scourge from Heaven am driven from land  
to land.

What has been done thou hearest. And if thou  
Can'st tell what yet remains of woe, declare it ;  
Nor in thy pity soothe me with false words ;  
For hollow words, I deem, are worst of ills.

*Chor.* Away, away, let be :

Ne'er thought I that such tales  
Would ever, ever come unto mine ears ;

---

See note 40 on page 68.

Nor that such terrors, woes, and outrages,  
    Hard to look on, hard to bear,  
Would chill my soul with sharp goad, double-  
    edged.

    Ah fate ! Ah fate !

I shudder, seeing Io's fortune strange.

*Prom.* Thou art too quick in groaning, full  
    of fear :

Wait thou a while until thou hear the rest.

*Chor.* Speak thou and tell. Unto the sick  
    't is sweet

Clearly to know what yet remains of pain.

*Prom.* Your former wish ye gained full  
    easily.

Your first desire was to learn of her

The tale she tells of her own sufferings ;

Now therefore hear the woes that yet remain

For this poor maid to bear at Hera's hands.

And thou, O child of Inachos ! take heed

To these my words, that thou may'st hear the  
    goal

Of all thy wanderings. First then, turning  
    hence

Towards the sunrise, tread the untilled plains,

And thou shalt reach the Skythian nomads,  
    those <sup>41</sup>

Who on smooth-rolling waggons dwell aloft

---

See note 41 on page 68.

In wicker houses, with far-darting bows  
 Duly equipped. Approach thou not to these,  
 But trending round the coasts on which the surf  
 Beats with loud murmurs<sup>42</sup> traverse thou that  
 clime.

On the left hand there dwell the Chalybes,<sup>43</sup>  
 Who work in iron. Of these do thou beware.  
 For fierce are they and most inhospitable ;  
 And thou wilt reach the river fierce and strong,  
 True to its name.<sup>44</sup> This seek not thou to cross,  
 For it is hard to ford, until thou come  
 To Caucasos itself, of all high hills  
 The highest, where a river pours its strength  
 From the high peaks themselves. And thou  
 must cross

Those summits near the stars, must onward go  
 Towards the south, where thou shalt find the host  
 Of the Amazons, hating men, whose home  
 Shall one day be around Thermôdon's bank,  
 By Themiskyra,<sup>45</sup> where the ravenous jaws  
 Of Salmydessos ope upon the sea,  
 Treacherous to sailors, stepdame stern to  
 ships,<sup>46</sup>

And they with right good-will shall be thy  
 guides ;

And thou, hard by a broad pool's narrow gates,  
 Wilt pass to the Kimmerian isthmus. Leaving

---

See notes 42, 43, 44, 45 and 46 on page 68.



This boldly, thou must cross Mæotic channel ;<sup>47</sup>  
 And there shall be great fame 'mong mortal  
     men

Of this thy journey, and the Bosporos<sup>48</sup>  
 Shall take its name from thee. And Europe's  
     plain

Then quitting, thou shalt gain the Asian coast.  
 Dost not the all-ruling monarch of the Gods  
 Seem all ways cruel ? For, although a God,  
 He, seeking to embrace this mortal maid,  
 Imposed these wanderings on her. Thou hast  
     found,

O maiden ! bitter suitor for thy hand ;  
 For great as are the ills thou now hast heard,  
 Know that as yet not e'en the prelude's known.

*Io.* Ah woe ! woe ! woe !

*Prom.* Again thou groan'st and criest. What  
     wilt do

When thou shalt learn the evils yet to come ?

*Chor.* What ! are there troubles still to come  
     for her ?

*Prom.* Yea, stormy sea of woe most lament-  
     able.

*Io.* What gain is it to live ? Why cast I not  
 Myself at once from this high precipice,  
 And, dashed to earth, be free from all my woes ?  
 Far better were it once for all to die

---

See notes 47 and 48 on page 68.

Than all one's days to suffer pain and grief.

*Prom.* My struggles then full hardly thou  
would'st bear,

For whom there is no destiny of death ;

For that might bring a respite from my woes :

But now there is no limit to my pangs

Till Zeus be hurled out from his sovereignty.

*Io.* What ! shall Zeus e'er be hurled from  
his high state ?

*Prom.* Thou would'st rejoice, I trow, to see  
that fall.

*Io.* How should I not, when Zeus so foully  
wrongs me ?

*Prom.* That this is so thou now may'st hear  
from me.

*Io.* Who then shall rob him of his sceptred  
sway ?

*Prom.* Himself shall do it by his own rash  
plans.

*Io.* But how ? Tell this, unless it bringeth  
harm.

*Prom.* He shall wed one for whom one day  
he'll grieve.

*Io.* Heaven-born or mortal ? Tell, if tell  
thou may'st.

*Prom.* Why ask'st thou who ? I may not  
tell thee that.

*Io.* Shall his bride hurl him from his throne  
of might ?

*Pro.* Yea ; she shall bear child mightier  
than his sire.

*Io.* Has he no way to turn aside that doom ?

*Prom.* No, none ; unless I from my bonds  
be loosed.<sup>49</sup>

*Io.* Who then shall loose thee 'gainst the  
will of Zeus ?

*Prom.* It must be one of thy posterity.

*Io.* What, shall a child of mine free thee  
from ills ?

*Prom.* Yea, the third generation after  
ten<sup>50</sup>

*Io.* No more thine oracles are clear to me.

*Prom.* Nay, seek not thou thine own drear  
fate to know.

*Io.* Do not, a boon presenting, then with-  
draw it.

*Prom.* Of two alternatives, I 'll give thee  
choice.

*Io.* Tell me of what, then give me leave to  
choose.

*Prom.* I give it then. Choose, or that I  
should tell

Thy woes to come, or who shall set me free.

*Chor.* Of these be willing one request to  
grant

To her, and one to me ; nor scorn my words ;

---

See notes 49 and 50 on pages 68 and 69.

Tell her what yet of wanderings she must bear,  
And me who shall release thee. This I crave.

*Prom.* Since ye are eager, I will not refuse  
To utter fully all that ye desire.

Thee, Io, first I'll tell thy wanderings wild,  
Thou, write it in the tablets of thy mind.

When thou shalt cross the straits, of continents  
The boundary,<sup>51</sup> take thou the onward path  
Ou to the fiery-hued and sun-tracked East.

[And first of all, to frozen Northern blasts  
Thou'lt come, and there beware the rushing  
whirl,

Lest it should come upon thee suddenly,  
And sweep thee onward with the cloud-rack  
wild];<sup>52</sup>

Crossing the sea-surf till thou come at last  
Unto Kisthene's Gorgoneian plains,  
Where dwell the grey-haired virgin Phorkides,<sup>53</sup>  
Three, swan-shaped, with one eye between them  
all

And but one tooth ; whom nor the sun beholds  
With radiant beams, nor yet the moon by night :  
And near them are their wingèd sisters three,  
The Gorgons, serpent-tressed, and hating men,  
Whom mortal wight may not behold and live.  
Such is one ill I bid thee guard against ;  
Now hear another monstrous sight : Beware

---

See notes 51, 52 and 53 on page 69.

The sharp-beaked hounds of Zeus that never  
bark,<sup>54</sup>

The Gryphons, and the one-eyed, mounted  
host

Of Arimaspians, who around the stream  
That flows o'er gold, the ford of Pluto, dwell;<sup>55</sup>  
Draw not thou nigh to them. But distant land  
Thou shalt approach, the swarthy tribes who  
dwell

By the sun's fountain,<sup>56</sup> Æthiopia's stream :  
By its banks wend thy way until thou come  
To that great fall where from the Bybline hills  
The Neilos pours its pure and holy flood ;  
And it shall guide thee to Neilotic land,  
Three-angled, where, O Io, 'tis decreed,  
For thee and for thy progeny to found  
A far-off colony. And if of this  
Aught seem to thee as stammering speech ob-  
scure,

Ask yet again and learn it thoroughly :  
Far more of leisure have I than I like.

*Chor.* If thou hast aught to add, aught left  
untold

Of her sore-wasting wanderings, speak it out ;  
But if thou hast said all, then grant to us  
The boon we asked. Thou dost not, sure, for-  
get it.

---

See notes 54, 55 and 56 on page 69.

*Prom.* The whole course of her journeying  
 she hath heard,  
 And that she know she hath not heard in vain  
 I will tell out what troubles she hath borne  
 Before she came here, giving her sure proof  
 Of these my words. The greater bulk of things  
 I will pass o'er, and to the very goal  
 Of all thy wanderings go. For when thou  
 cam'st  
 To the Molossian plains, and by the grove <sup>57</sup>  
 Of lofty-rigged Dodona, and the shrine  
 Oracular of Zeus Thesprotian,  
 And the strange portent of the talking oaks,  
 By which full clearly, not in riddle dark,  
 Thou wast addressed as noble spouse of Zeus,—  
 If aught of pleasure such things give to thee,—  
 Thence stung to frenzy, thou did'st rush along  
 The sea-coast's path to Rhea's mighty gulf,<sup>58</sup>  
 In backward way from whence thou now art  
 vexed,  
 And for all time to come that reach of sea,  
 Know well, from thee Ionian shall be called,  
 To all men record of thy journeyings.  
 These then are tokens to thee that my mind  
 Sees somewhat more than that is manifest.  
 What follows (*to the Chorus*) I will speak to you  
 and her

---

See notes 57 and 58 on page 70.

In common, on the track of former words  
Returning once again. A city stands  
Canôbos, at its country's furthest bound,  
Hard by the mouth and silt-bank of the Nile;  
There Zeus shall give thee back thy mind  
again,<sup>59</sup>

With hand that works no terror touching thee,—  
Touch only—and thou then shalt bear a child  
Of Zeus begotten, Epaphos, "Touch-born,"  
Swarthy of hue, whose lot shall be to reap  
The whole plain watered by the broad-streamed  
Neilos :

And in the generation fifth from him  
A household numbering fifty shall return  
Against their will to Argos, in their flight  
From wedlock with their cousins.<sup>60</sup> And they  
too,

(Kites but a little space behind the doves)  
With eager hopes pursuing marriage rites  
Beyond pursuit shall come ; and God shall  
grudge

To give up their sweet bodies. And the land  
Pelagian<sup>61</sup> shall receive them, when by stroke  
Of woman's murderous hand these men shall lie  
Smitten to death by daring deed of night :  
For every bride shall take her husband's life,  
And dip in blood the sharp two-edgèd sword

---

See notes 59, 60 and 61 on page 70.

(So to my foes may Kypris show herself!)<sup>62</sup>  
 Yet one of that fair band shall love persuade  
 Her husband not to slaughter, and her will  
 Shall lose its edge; and she shall make her  
                   choice

Rather as weak than murderous to be known.  
 And she at Argos shall a royal seed  
 Bring forth (long speech 't would take to tell  
                   this clear)

Famed for his arrows, who shall set me free<sup>63</sup>  
 From these my woes. Such was the oracle  
 Mine ancient mother Themis, Titan-born,  
 Gave to me; but the manner and the means,—  
 That needs a lengthy tale to tell the whole,  
 And thou can'st nothing gain by learning it.

*Io.* E!eleu! Oh, E!eleu!<sup>64</sup>—

The throbbing pain inflames me, and the mood  
                   Of frenzy-smitten rage;  
                   The gadfly's pointed sting,  
                   Not forged with fire, attacks,  
 And my heart beats against my breast with fear.  
                   Mine eyes whirl round and round:  
                   Out of my course I'm borne  
 By the wild spirit of fierce agony,  
                   And cannot curb my lips,  
 And turbid speech at random dashes on  
 Upon the waves of dread calamity.

---

See notes 62, 63 and 64 on page 70.



## STROPH. I

*Chor.* Wise, very wise was he  
 Who first in thought conceived this maxim  
     sage,  
     And spread it with his speech, <sup>65</sup>—  
 That the best wedlock is with equals found,  
 And that a craftsman, born to work with hands,  
     Should not desire to wed  
 Or with the soft luxurious heirs of wealth,  
 Or with the race that boast their lineage high.

## ANTISTROPH. I

Oh ne'er, oh ne'er, dread Fates,  
 May ye behold me as the bride of Zeus,  
     The partner of his couch,  
 Nor may I wed with any heaven-born spouse !  
 For I shrink back, beholding Io's lot  
     Of loveless maidenhood,  
 Consumed and smitten low exceedingly  
 By the wild wanderings from great Hera sent !

## STROPH. II

To me, when wedlock is on equal terms,  
     It gives no cause to fear :  
 Ne'er may the love of any of the Gods,  
     The strong Gods, look on me  
     With glance I cannot 'scape !

---

See note 65 on page 70.

## ANTISTROPH. II

That fate is war that none can war against,  
 Source of resourceless ill ;  
 Nor know I what might then become of me :  
 I see not how to 'scape  
 The counsel deep of Zeus.

*Prom.* Yea, of a truth shall Zeus, though stiff  
 of will,

Be brought full low. Such bed of wedlock now  
 Is he preparing, one to cast him forth  
 In darkness from his sovereignty and throne.  
 And then the curse his father Cronos spake  
 Shall have its dread completion, even that  
 He uttered when he left his ancient throne ;  
 And from these troubles no one of the Gods  
 But me can clearly show the way to 'scape.  
 I know the time and manner : therefore now  
 Let him sit fearless, in his peals on high  
 Putting his trust, and shaking in his hands  
 His darts fire-breathing. Nought shall they avail  
 To hinder him from falling shamefully  
 A fall intolerable. Such a combatant  
 He arms against himself, a marvel dread,  
 Who shall a fire discover mightier far  
 Than the red levin, and a sound more dread  
 Than roaring of the thunder, and shall shiver  
 That plague sea-born that causeth earth to  
 quake,  
 The trident, weapon of Poseidon's strength :

And stumbling on this evil, he shall learn  
How far apart a king's lot from a slave's.

*Chor.* What thou dost wish thou mutterest  
against Zeus.

*Prom.* Things that shall be, and things I  
wish, I speak.

*Chor.* And must we look for one to master  
Zeus?

*Prom.* Yea, troubles harder far than these  
are his.

*Chor.* Art not afraid to vent such words as  
these?

*Prom.* What can I fear whose fate is not to  
die?

*Chor.* But He may send on thee worse pain  
than this.

*Prom.* So let Him do: nought finds me  
unprepared.

*Chor.* Wisdom is theirs who Adrasteia wor-  
ship. <sup>66</sup>

*Prom.* Worship then, praise and flatter him  
that rules;

My care for Zeus is nought, and less than  
nought:

Let Him act, let Him rule this little while,  
E'en as He will; for long He shall not rule  
Over the Gods. But lo! I see at hand

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See note 66 on page 70.

The courier of the Gods, the minister  
Of our new sovereign. Doubtless he has come  
To bring me tidings of some new device.

*Enter HERMES.*

*Herm.* Thee do I speak to,—thee, the  
teacher wise,  
The bitterly o'er-bitter, who 'gainst Gods  
Hast sinned in giving gifts to short-lived  
men—

I speak to thee, the filcher of bright fire.  
The Father bids thee say what marriage thou  
Dost vaunt, and who shall hurl Him from his  
might ;

And this too not in dark mysterious speech,  
But tell each point out clearly. Give me not,  
Prometheus, task of double journey. Zeus  
Thou seest, is not with such words appeased.

*Prom.* Stately of utterance, full of haughti-  
ness  
Thy speech, as fits a messenger of Gods.  
Ye yet are young in your new rule, and think  
To dwell in painless towers. Have I not  
Seen two great rulers driven forth from  
thence ?<sup>67</sup>

And now the third, who reigneth, I shall see  
In basest, quickest fall. Seem I to thee

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See note 67 on page 70.

To shrink and quail before these new-made  
Gods?

Far, very far from that am I. But thou,  
Track once again the path by which thou  
camest ;

Thou shalt learn nought of what thou askest me.

*Herm.* It was by such self-will as this  
before

That thou did'st bring these sufferings on thy-  
self.

*Prom.* I for my part, be sure, would never  
change

My evil state for that thy bondslave's lot.

*Herm.* To be the bondslave of this rock, I  
trow,

Is better than to be Zeus' trusty herald!

*Prom.* So it is meet the insulter to insu't.

*Herm.* Thou waxest proud, 't would seem,  
of this thy doom.

*Prom.* Wax proud! God grant that I may  
see my foes

Thus waxing proud, and thee among the rest!

*Herm.* Dost blame me then for thy calam-  
ities?

*Prom.* In one short sentence—all the Gods  
I hate,

Who my good turns with evil turns repay.

*Herm.* Thy words prove thee with no slight  
madness plagued,

*Prom.* If to hate foes be madness, mad I am.

*Herm.* Not one could bear thee wert thou prosperous.

*Prom.* Ah me !

*Herm.* That word is all unknown to Zeus.

*Prom.* Time waxing old can many a lesson teach.

*Herm.* Yet thou at least hast not true wisdom learnt.

*Prom.* I had not else addressed a slave like thee.

*Herm.* Thou wilt say nought the Father asks, 't would seem.

*Prom.* Fine debt I owe him, favour to repay.

*Herm.* Me as a boy thou scornest then, forsooth.

*Prom.* And art thou not a boy, and sillier far,  
 If that thou thinkest to learn aught from me ?  
 There is no torture nor device by which  
 Zeus can impel me to disclose these things  
 Before these bonds that outrage me be loosed.  
 Let then the blazing levin-flash be hurled ;  
 With white-winged snow-storm and with earth-  
     born thunders  
 Let Him disturb and trouble all that is ;  
 Nought of these things shall force me to declare  
 Whose hand shall drive him from his sover-  
     eignty.

*Herm.* See if thou findest any help in this.

*Prom.* Long since all this I've seen, and  
formed my plans.

*Herm.* O fool, take heart, take heart at last  
in time,

To form right thoughts for these thy present  
woes.

*Prom.* Like one who soothes a wave, thy  
speech in vain

Vexes my soul. But deem not thou that I,

Fearing the will of Zeus, shall e'er become

As womanised in mind, or shall entreat

Him whom I greatly loathe, with upturned  
hand,

In woman's fashion, from these bonds of mine

To set me free. Far, far am I from that.

*Herm.* It seems that I, saying much, shall  
speak in vain ;

For thou in nought by prayers art pacified,

Or softened in thy heart, but like a colt

Fresh harnessed, thou dost champ thy bit, and  
strive,

And fight against the reins. Yet thou art stiff

In weak device ; for self-will, by itself,

In one who is not wise, is less than nought.

Look to it, if thou disobey my words,

How great a storm and triple wave of ills,<sup>68</sup>

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See note 68 on page 70.

Not to be 'scaped, shall come on thee ; for first  
 With thunder and the levin's blazing flash  
 The Father this ravine of rock shall crush,  
 And shall thy carcase hide, and stern embrace  
 Of stony arms shall keep thee in thy place.  
 And having traversed space of time full long,  
 Thou shalt come back to light, and then his  
     hound,

The wingèd hound of Zeus, the ravening eagle  
 Shall greedily make banquet of thy flesh,  
 Coming all day an uninvited guest,  
 And glut himself upon thy liver dark.  
 And of that anguish look not for the end,  
 Before some God shall come to bear thy woes,  
 And will to pass to Hades' sunless realm,  
 And the dark cloudy depths of Tartaros.<sup>69</sup>  
 Wherefore take heed. No feigned boast is this,  
 But spoken all too truly ; for the lips  
 Of Zeus know not to speak a lying speech,  
 But will perform each single word. And thou,  
 Search well, be wise nor think that self-willed  
     pride  
 Shall ever better prove than counsel good.

*Chor.* To us doth Hermes seem to utter  
     words

Not out of season ; for he bids thee quit

---

See note 69 on page 71.



Thy self-willed pride and seek for council good  
Hearken thou to him. To the wise of soul  
It is foul shame to sin persistently.

*Prom.* To me who knew it all  
He hath this message borne ;  
And that a foe from foes  
Should suffer is not strange.  
Therefore on me be hurled  
The sharp-edged wreath of fire ;  
And let heaven's vault be stirred  
With thunder and the blasts  
Of fiercest winds ; and Earth  
From its foundations strong,  
E'en to its deepest roots,  
Let storm-wind make to rock ;  
And let the Ocean wave,  
With wild and foaming surge,  
Be heaped up to the paths  
Where move the stars of heaven ;  
And to dark Tartaros  
Let Him my carcase hurl,  
With mighty blasts of force :  
Yet me He shall not slay.

*Herm.* Such words and thoughts from  
one  
Brain-stricken one may hear.  
What space divides his state  
From frenzy? What repose

Hath he from maddened rage?  
 But ye who pitying stand  
 And share his bitter griefs,  
 Quickly from hence depart,  
 Lest the relentless roar  
 Of thunder stun your soul.

*Chor.* With other words attempt  
 To counsel and persuade,  
 And I will hear : for now  
 Thou hast this word thrust in  
 That we may never bear.  
 How dost thou bid me train  
 My soul to baseness vile?  
 With him I will endure  
 Whatever is decreed.  
 Traitors I 've learnt to hate,  
 Nor is there any plague  
 That more than this I loathe.

*Herm.* Nay then, remember ye  
 What now I say, nor blame  
 Your fortune : never say  
 That Zeus hath cast you down  
 To evil not foreseen.  
 Not so ; ye cast yourselves :  
 For now with open eyes,  
 Not taken unawares,  
 In Ate's endless net  
 Ye shall entangled be

By folly of your own.

[*A pause, and then flashes of lightning  
and peals of thunder.* 70

*Prom.* Yea, now in very deed,  
No more in word alone,  
The earth shakes to and fro,  
And the loud thunder's voice  
Bellows hard by, and blaze  
The flashing I vin-fires ;  
And tempests whirl the dust,  
And gusts of all wild winds  
On one another leap,  
In wild conflicting blasts,  
And sky with sea is blent :  
Such is the storm from Zeus  
That comes as working fear,  
In terrors manifest.  
O Mother venerable !  
O Æther ! rolling round  
The common light of all,  
See'st thou what wrongs I bear ?

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See note 70 on page 71.



## NOTES.

1. The scene seems at first an exception to the early conventional rule, which forbade the introduction of a third actor on the Greek stage. But it has been noticed that (1) Force does not speak, and (2) Prometheus does not speak till Strength and Force have retired, and that it is therefore probable that the whole work of nailing is done on a lay figure or effigy of some kind, and that one of the two who had before taken part in the dialogue then speaks behind it in the character of Prometheus. So the same actor must have appeared in succession as Okeanos, Io, and Hermes.

2. Prometheus (*Forethought*) is the son of Themis (*Right*) the second occupant of the Pythian Oracle (*Eumen.*, v. 2). His sympathy with man leads him to impart the gift which raised them out of savage animal life, and for this Zeus, who appears throughout the play as a hard taskmaster, sentences him to fetters. Hephæstos, from whom this fire had been stolen, has a touch of pity for him. Strength, who comes as the servant, not of Hephæstos, but of Zeus himself, acts, as such, with merciless cruelty.

3. The generalised statement refers to Zeus, as having but recently expelled Cronos from his throne in Heaven.

4. Hephæstos, as the great fire-worker, had taught Prometheus to use the fire which he afterwards bestowed on men.

5. Perhaps, "All might is ours except o'er Gods to rule."

6. The words indicate that the effigy of Prometheus, now nailed to the rock, was, as being that of a Titan, of colossal size.

7. The touch is characteristic as showing that here, as in the *Eumenides*, Æschylos relied on the horribleness of the masks, as part of the machinery of his plays.

8. The silence of Prometheus up to this point was partly, as has been said, consequent on the conventional laws of the Greek drama, but it is also a touch of supreme insight into the heroic temper. In the presence of his torturers, the Titan will not utter even a groan. When they are gone, he appeals to the sympathy of Nature.

9. The legend is from Hesiod, (*Theogon.* v. 567.) The fennel, or *narthex*, seems to have been a large umbelliferous plant with a large stem filled with a sort of pith, which was used when dry as tinder. Stalks were carried as wands (the *thyrsi*) by the men and women who joined in the Bacchanalian processions. In modern botany, the name is given to the plant which produces *Asafœtida*, and the stem of which, from its resinous character, would burn freely, and so connect itself with the Promethean myth. On the other hand, the *Narthex Asafœtida* is found at present only in Persia, Affghanistan, and the Punjaub.

10. The ocean nymphs, like other divine ones, would be anointed with ambrosial unguents, and the odour would be wafted before them by the rustling of their wings. This, too, we may think of as part of the "stage effects" of the play.

11. The words are not those of a vague terror only. The sufferer knows that his tormentor is to come to him before long on wings, and therefore the sound as of the flight of birds is full of terrors.

12. By some stage mechanism the Chorus remains in the air till verse 280, when at the request of Prometheus, they alight.

13. Here, as throughout the play, the poet puts into the mouth of his *dramatis personæ* words which must have seemed to the devouter Athenians sacriligious enough to call for an indictment before the Areiopagos. But the final play of the Trilogy came, we may believe, as the *Eumenides* did in its turn, as a reconciliation of the conflicting thoughts that rise in men's minds out of the seeming anomalies of the world.

14. The words leave it uncertain whether Themis is identified with Earth, or, as in *Eumenides.* (v. 2,) distinguished from her. The Titans as a class, then children of Okeanos and Chthôn (another name for *Land* or *Earth*) are the kindred rather than the brothers of Prometheus.

15. The generalising words here, as in v. 35, appeal to the Athenian hatred of all that was represented by the words *tyrant* and *tyranny*.

16. The state described is that of men who "through fear of death are all their lifetime subject to bondage. That state, the parent of all superstition, fostered the slavish awe in which Zeus delighted. Prometheus, representing the active intellect of man, bestows new powers, new interests, new hopes, which at last divert them from that fear.

17. The home of Okeanos was in the far west, at the boundary of the great stream surrounding the whole world, from which he took his name.

18. One of the sayings of the Seven Sages, already recognised and quoted as a familiar proverb.

19. See Plumptre's edition of *Agamemnon*, v. 1602.

20. In the mythos, Okeanos had given his daughter Hesione in marriage to Prometheus after the theft of fire, and thus had identified himself with his transgression.

21. In the *Theogony* of Hesiod, (v. 509,) Prometheus and Atlas appear as the sons of two sisters. As other Titans were thought of as buried under volcanoes, so this one was identified with the mountain which had been seen by travellers to Western Africa, or in the seas beyond it, rising like a column to support the vault of heaven. In Herodotus (iv. 174) and all later writers, the name is given to the chain of mountains in Lybia, as being the "pillar of the firmament;" but Humboldt and others identify it with the lonely peak of Teneriffe, as seen by Phœnikian or Hellenic voyagers. Teneriffe, too, like most of the other Titan mountains, was at one time volcanic. Homer, (*Odys*, i., 53) represents him as holding the pillars which separate heaven from earth; Hesiod (*Theogon.* v. 517) as himself standing near the Hesperides, (this, too, points to Teneriffe) sustaining the heavens with his head and shoulders.

22. The volcanic character of the whole of Asia Minor, and the liability to earthquakes which has marked nearly every period of its history, led men to connect it also with the traditions of the Titans, some accordingly placing the home of Typhon in Phrygia, some, near Sar-

dis, some, as here, in Kilikia. Hesiod (*Theogon*, v. 820) describes Typhon (or Typhoeus) as a serpent-monster hissing out fire; Pindar (*Pyth.* i. 30, viii., 21), as lying with his head and breast crushed beneath the weight of Ætna, and his feet extending to Cumæ.

23. The words point probably to an eruption, then fresh in men's memories, which had happened B.C. 476.

24. By some editors this speech from "No, not so," to "thou know'st how," is assigned to Okeanos.

25. These are, of course, the Amazons, who were believed to have come through Thrakè from the Tauric Chersonesos, and had left traces of their names and habits in the Attic traditions of Theseus.

26. Beyond the plains of Skythia, and the lake Mæotis (the sea of Azov) there would be the great river Okeanos, which was believed to flow round the earth.

27. Sarmatia has been conjectured instead of Arabia. No Greek author sanctions the extension of the latter name to so remote a region as that north of the Caspian.

28. The Greek leaves the object of the sympathy undefined, but it seems better to refer it to that which Atlas receives from the waste of waters around, and the dark world beneath, than the pity shown to Prometheus. This had already been dwelt on in line 421.

29. The passage that follows has for modern palæontologists the interest of coinciding with their views as to the progress of human society, and the condition of mankind during what has been called the "Stone" period. Comp. Lucretius, v. 955-984.

30. Comp. Mr. Blakesley's note on Herod. ii. 4, as showing that here there was the greater risk of faulty observation.

31. Another reading gives perhaps a better sense—  
 "Memory, handmaid true  
 And mother of the Muses."

32. In Greece, as throughout the East, the ox was used for all agricultural labours, the horse by the noble and the rich, either in war chariots, or stately processions, or in chariot races in the great games.

33. Compare with this the account of the inventions of Palamedes in Sophocles, *Fragm.* 379.



34. Here we can recognise the knowledge of one who had studied in the schools of Pythagoras, or had at any rate picked up their terminology. A more immediate connection may perhaps be traced with the influence of Epimenides, who was said to have spent many years in searching out the healing virtues of plants, and to have written books about them.

35. The lines that follow form almost a manual of the art of divination as then practised. The "ominous sounds" include chance words, strange cries, any unexpected utterance that connected itself with men's fears for the future. The flights of birds were watched by the diviner as he faced the north, and so the region on the right hand was that of the sunrise, light, blessedness; on the left there were darkness and gloom and death.

36. So Io was represented, we are told, by Greek sculptors, (Herod. ii. 41.) as Isis was by those of Egypt. The points of contact between the myth of Io and that of Prometheus, as adopted, or perhaps developed, by Æschylos, are—(1) that from her the destined deliverer of the chained Titan is to come; (2) that both were suffering from the cruelty of Zeus; (3) that the wanderings of Io gave scope for the wild tales of far countries on which the imagination of the Athenians fed greedily. But, as the *Suppliants* may serve to show, the story itself had a strange fascination for him. In the birth of Epaphos, and Io's release from her frenzy, he saw, it may be, a reconciliation of what had seemed hard to reconcile, a solution of the problems of the world, like in kind to that which was shadowed forth in the lost *Prometheus Unbound*.

37. Argos had been slain by Hermes, and his eyes transferred by Hera to the tail of the peacock, and that bird was thenceforth sacred to her.

38. Inachos the father of Io (identified with the Argive river of the same name) was, like all rivers, a son of Okeanos and therefore brother to the nymphs who had come to see Prometheus.

39. The words used have an almost technical meaning as applied to animals that were consecrated to the service of God, and set free to wander where they liked. The fate of Io, as at once devoted to Zeus and animalised in form, was thus shadowed forth in the very language of the Oracle.

40. Lerna was a lake near the mouth of the Inachos close to the sea. Kerchueia may perhaps be identified with the Kenchreæ, the haven of Korinth in later geographies.

41. The wicker huts used by Skythian or Thracian nomads (the Calmucks of modern geographers) are described by Herodotus (iv. 46) and are still in use.

42. Sc. the N. E. boundary of the Euxine, where spurs of the Caucasos ridge approach the sea.

43. The Chalybes are placed by geographers to the south of Colchis. The description of the text indicates a locality farther to the north.

44. Probably the Araxes, which the Greeks would connect with a word conveying the idea of a torrent dashing on the rocks. The description seems to imply a river flowing into the Euxine from the Caucasos, and the condition is fulfilled by the Hypanis or *Kouban*.

45. When the Amazons appear in contact with Greek history, they are found in Thrace. But they had come from the coast of Pontos, and near the mouth of the Thermôdon (*Thermeh*). The words of Prometheus point to yet earlier migrations from the East.

46. Here, as in Soph. *Antig.* (970) the name Salmydessus represents the rock-bound, havenless coast from the promontory of Thynias to the entrance of the Bosphoros, which had given to the Black Sea its earlier name of Axenos, the "inhospitable."

47. The track is here in some confusion. From the Amazons south of the Caucasos, Io is to find her way to the Tauric Chersonese (the Crimea) and the Kimmerian Bosphoros, which flows into the Sea of Azov, and so to return to Asia.

48. Here, as in a hundred other instances, a false etymology has become the parent of a myth. The name Bosphoros is probably Asiatic not Greek, and has an entirely different signification.

49. The lines refer to the story that Zeus loved Thetis the daughter of Nereus, and followed her to Caucasos, but abstained from marriage with her because Prometheus warned him that the child born of that union

should overthrow his father. Here the future is used of what was still contingent only. In the lost play of the Trilogy the myth was possibly brought to its conclusion and connected with the release of Prometheus.

50. Heracles, whose genealogy was traced through Alcmena, Perseus, Danaë, Danaos, and seven other names to Epaphos and Io.

51. Probably the Kimmerian Bosporos. The Tanais or Phasis has, however, been conjectured.

52 The history of the passage in brackets is curious enough to call for a note. They are not in any extant, but they are found in a passage quoted by Galen (v. p. 454) as from the *Prometheus Bound*, and are inserted here by Mr. Paley.

53. Kisthene belongs to the geography of legend, lying somewhere on the shore of the great ocean-river in Lybia or Ethiopia, at the end of the world, a great mountain in the far West, beyond the Hesperides, the dwelling-place, as here, of the Gorgons, the daughters of Phorkys. Those first named are the Graiæ.

54. Here, like the "winged hound" of v. 1043, for the eagles that are the messengers of Zeus.

55. We are carried back again from the fabled West to the fabled East. The Arimaspians, with one eye, and the Grypes or Gryphons, (the griffins of mediæval heraldry), quadrupeds with the wings and beaks of eagles, were placed by most writers (Herod. iv. 13, 27) in the north of Europe, in or beyond the *terra incognita* of Skythia. The mention of the "ford of Pluto" and Æthiopia, however, may possibly imply (if we identify it, as Mr. Paley does, with the Tartessos of Spain, or Boetis—*Guadalquivir*) that Æschylos followed another legend which placed them in the West. There is possibly a *paronomasia* between Pluto, the God of Hades, and Plutos, the ideal God of riches.

56. The name was applied by later writers (Quintus Curtius, iv. 7, 22; Lucretius, vi. 848) to the fountain in the temple of Jupiter Ammon in the great Oasis. The "river Æthiops" may be purely imaginary, but it may also suggest the possibility of some vague knowledge of the Niger, or more probably of the Nile itself in the upper regions of its course. The "Bybline Hills" carry the name Byblos which we only read of as belonging to a town in the Delta, to the Second Cataract.

57. Comp. Sophocles, *Trachin*, v. 1168.

58. The Adriatic or Ionian Gulf.

59. In the *Suppliants*, Zeus is said to have soothed her, and restored her to her human consciousness by his "divine breathings." The thought underlying the legend may be taken either as a distortion of some primitive tradition, or as one of the "unconscious prophecies" of heathenism. The deliverer is not to be born after the common manner of men, and is to have a divine as well as a human parentage.

60. See the argument of the *Suppliants*, who, as the daughters of Danaos, descended from Epaphos, are here referred to. The passage is noticeable as showing that the theme of that tragedy was already present to the poet's thoughts.

61. Argos. So in the *Suppliants*, Pelasgos is the mythical king of the Apian land who receives them.

62. Hypermnæstra, who spared Lynceus, and by him became the mother of Abas and a line of Argive kings.

63. Heracles, who came to Caucasos, and with his arrows slew the eagle that devoured Prometheus.

64. The word is simply an interjection of pain, but one so characteristic that I have thought it better to reproduce it than to give any English equivalent.

65. The maxim, "Marry with a woman thine equal," was ascribed to Pittacos.

66. The Euphemism of later scholiasts derived the name from a king Adrastos, who was said to have been the first to build a temple to Nemesis, and so the power thus worshipped was called after his name. A better etymology leads us to see in it the idea of the "inevitable" law of retribution working unseen by men, and independently even of the arbitrary will of the Gods, and bringing destruction upon the proud and haughty.

67. Comp. *Agam.* 162-6.

68. Either a mere epithet of intensity, as in our "thrice blest," or rising from the supposed fact that every third wave was larger and more impetuous than

the others, like the *fluctus decumanus* of the Latins, or from the sequence of three great waves which some have noted as a common phenomenon in storms.

69. Here again we have a strange shadowing forth of the mystery of Atonement, and what we have learnt to call "vicarious" satisfaction. In the later legend, Cheiron, suffering from the agony of his wounds, resigns his immortality, and submits to die in place of the ever-living death to which Prometheus was doomed.

70. It is noticeable that both Æschylos and Sophocles have left us tragedies which end in a thunderstorm as an element of effect. But the contrast between the *Prometheus* and the *Œdipus at Colonus* as to the impression left in the one case of serene reconciliation, and in the other of violent antagonism, is hardly less striking than the resemblance in the outward phenomena, which are common to the two.



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